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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Boyd et al.
Application No. 09/982,502
Filed: October 18, 2001
Attorney Docket No. HRT0279

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: DECISION ON PETITION
: UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)
:

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), filed January 14, 2004, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 for the benefit of priority to the prior-filed nonprovisional applications set forth in the amendment filed concurrently with the instant petition.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition for acceptance of a claim for late priority under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after the expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii). In addition, the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) of the prior-filed application(s), unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The instant petition does not comply with item (1) above.

A reference to add the above-noted, prior-filed applications on page one following the first sentence of the specification has been included in a concurrently filed amendment. However, the amendment is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference some of the prior-filed applications, albeit subsequent to the filing date of this application. In this regard, on filing; the specification (at one) incorporated application Nos. 08/281,891 filed July 28, 1994, and 08/023,778, filed February 22, 1993, and, at best, the transmittal letter expressly incorporated 09/487,024 filed January 19, 2000. Since the section 120 amendment proffered with the petition also seeks to now incorporate by reference: 09/019,014 filed February 5, 1998; and 08/486,941 filed June 7, 1995, the amendment is facially improper.

Petitioner's attention is directed to Dart Industries v. Banner, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980), where the court drew a distinction between a permissible 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement and the impermissible introduction of new matter by way of incorporation by reference in a 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement. The court specifically stated:

Section 120 merely provides a mechanism whereby an application becomes entitled to benefit of the filing date of an earlier application disclosing the same subject matter. Common subject matter must be disclosed, in both applications, either specifically or by an express incorporation-by-reference of prior disclosed subject matter. Nothing in section 120 itself operates to carry forward any disclosure from an earlier application. In re deSeversky, supra at 674, 177 USPQ at 146-147. Section 120 contains no magical disclosure-augmenting powers able to pierce new matter barriers. It cannot, therefore, "limit" the absolute and express prohibition against new matter contained in section 251.

In order for the incorporation by reference statement to be effective as a proper safeguard against the omission of a portion of a prior application, the incorporation by reference statement must be included in the specification-as-filed, or in an amendment specifically referred to in an oath or declaration executing the application. *See In re deSeversky, supra. Note also MPEP 201.06(c).*

Accordingly, before the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) can be granted, a substitute amendment¹ deleting the incorporation by reference statement to the extent it includes 09/019,014 filed February 5, 1998; and 08/486,941 filed June 7, 1995, along with a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), is required.

As authorized, the \$1330 fee required by 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)(ii) has been charged to petitioner's Deposit Account

¹ Note 37 CFR 1.121

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